

PFLAG News & Views

Bridging GLBT and Allied Communities

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF PARENTS, FAMILIES & FRIENDS OF LESBIANS & GAYS OF DENVER

P.O. Box 18901 Denver, CO 80218-0901

Volume XXXI, Number 6

June 2011

MONTHLY MEETING

Legislative Panel Promises Informative Program

Thurs., June 2
7:30 p.m.
 Civil Rights:
 Current Status

The June 2 program will feature a panel of Colorado legislators and activists who will offer their views on the accomplishments of this year's legislative session and the outlook for progress in the coming months.

Included on the panel will be **Brad Clark**, Executive Director of One Colorado; **Sen. Pat Steadman** and **Rep. Sue Schafer**; and (tentatively) **Sen. Lucia Guzman**. Rep. Mark Ferrandino also accepted our invitation to be on the panel, but had to withdraw because he was called to Washington.

This will be an ideal opportunity to inform ourselves on the current status of GLBT civil rights in Colorado. John Ferguson, who organized the program, suggested that this would also provide us an opportunity to express our appreciation to these legislators and leaders for all of the work each has done on our behalf.

As always, the new families support group and the open-to-all group will meet separately at 6:30 p.m. in the library area. All will gather for announcements and the program at 7:30.

July 10 – Picnic
 July 7 – No Meeting



News & Views is published monthly by

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OUR MISSION

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons, their families and friends through: support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and secure equal civil rights. PFLAG provides an opportunity for dialog about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

And the 2011 PFLAG Scholarship Recipients Are...

By Deborah Stone

Three exceptional, college-bound high-school seniors from the Denver metro area charmed PFLAG Denver members during the May 5 meeting at Montview Presbyterian Church. Brenna Baker, Juliet Letteney, and Karen Rojas each received hearty rounds of applause as they accepted checks for \$1,000, received beautifully framed certificates, and spoke briefly to the audience.

Scholarship Chair and PFLAG Denver vice-president Deborah Stone handed out the awards, after giving a brief background on each student and reading excerpts from their application essays.

Colorado Academy senior Brenna Baker, who plans to study molecular biology at Mills College, wrote in her essay, "In all of my activism, I've found the most harmful manifestation of homopho-

bia is when people, even those who are supportive, treat queerness as an oddity and are uncomfortable talking about it. Dialogue is the most effective way to combat homophobia, and as I move forward I will continue inviting open conversations to encourage understanding and acceptance."



From left, Karen Rojas, Brenna Baker, Juliet Letteney, Deborah Stone.

Juliet Letteney, attending Littleton High, plans to study psychology at CSU. In her essay, she wrote, "As a straight ally, I've had several friends come out and always felt that they deserve to feel as safe and accepted as everyone else does. I would love to see a world where we define ourselves as humans first, unified in a way that our differences wouldn't divide us, but simply allow us to be individuals under an umbrella of humanity."

Karen Rojas, also from Littleton High, who plans to take a pre-med program at CU Boulder, wrote, "As a part of the LGBTQ (cont. on p. 4)

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Calendar of Events

June 2

PFLAG Denver Monthly Meeting
Montview Presbyterian Church
1980 Dahlia Street
Support Groups 6:30 P.M.
Program 7:30 P.M.
(See article, p. 1)

June 8

Community Shares 25th
Anniversary Celebration
(See News & Notes, p. 4)

June 17

Newsletter deadline

June 18 - 19

PrideFest
(See article this page)

June 30

Board of Directors meeting

July 10

Chapter ice cream social
NO MEETING ON JULY 7,
the usual first Thursday

August 13

AIDS Walk Colorado

November 3 - 6

PFLAG's 2011 Lobby Day
and National Convention
Washington, D.C.
(See article, p. 3)

PrideFest 2011 Is Nearly Here

By Judy Trompeter

On June 18 and 19, gay pride will be in the air! PrideFest occurs that weekend and will include exhibitor booths and performers at Civic Center Park on both days, and a parade on Sunday.

Volunteers are needed to set up, staff, and tear down our booth, where we'll sell t-shirts, buttons, bumper stickers, and jewelry. We'll need 3-4 people for each of the following shifts: Saturday 8-10:30 a.m. (set-up), 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m., 12:30-3 p.m., 2:30-5 p.m., and 4:30-7 p.m., and Sunday 9-11:30 a.m., 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m., 1-3:30 p.m., 3-5:30 p.m., and 5-7 p.m. (tear-down). Choose the time you'd like to assist and then give me a call, 303-573-5861.

The parade steps off at 9:30 a.m. Sunday in Cheesman Park and heads downtown on Colfax. This is a festive time for everyone, as



PrideFest 2009 – always energizing for PFLAGers!

PFLAGers from all over the state march together and the cheers for PFLAG from those lining the avenue show how much parents are appreciated. Plan to arrive no later than 9 a.m. to get in line; those who get to the park earlier can help inflate balloons and solicit

donations for them. We'll have a couple of convertibles for those who can't walk the entire route; let me know as soon as possible if you'll be needing a ride.

At deadline we do not have details about where exactly our booth will be located or what position we'll be assigned in the parade. I'll send out an e-announcement with those details in the week before PrideFest.

Gather up your GLBT-supportive buttons, t-shirts, and signs. Tie up your comfy walking shoes. Bring along some water and sunscreen. Map out a bus route. And we'll see you at PrideFest!

Books and Videos Are Needed

By Jody Applegate

PFLAG Denver is collaborating with The Center on their True Colors youth program, supporting GLBT "tweens" and their parents. We would like to have some books to display for the parents and also show appropriate videos at some of the meetings. Do you have GLBT-themed books and/or videos that you found helpful and which you would like to donate to this project?

Also Clare Kennelley is creating a reading list and would appreciate hearing from

any of you about books you have read in your "learning about gayness" journey. She needs title and author, a sentence regarding the subject, and whom the book targets (e.g., Catholic parents, parents of teens, etc.). If there are books that you felt weren't good or up to date, she would like to know that as well. Please email your book lists to her at cek80228@yahoo.com and copy me at mommyjody@cs.com.

Thanks so much for any help you can give us.

ENCOURAGING REPORT FROM KANSAS

By Sara Winter

My sister Beth lives in rural Kansas, a solidly conservative region that sometimes discourages her by its narrowness. But something impressive happened there a few months ago!

The county's Arts Cooperative invited gay musician Matt Alber to conduct choral workshops at county high schools and to give a concluding public concert. At the concert, Matt spoke comfortably about his sexual orientation, introducing each number with an anecdote about his experiences as a gay man. Beth was surprised by the warm reception given him by the largely older audience, and queried the director of the Arts Cooperative, who sent her this email:

"After Matt's concert, the board sat down with him for a debriefing about the concert, etc. After sharing glowing remarks about his remarkable

voice, we talked about his sexuality. I thanked him for talking openly about being a gay man. After I said that, one of the board members vocally vomited (for lack of a better term), and told us about her gay son ... something none of us knew, even though we've worked closely with her for over four years. And then others started to talk. For us, it was an intimate moment where we were able to share something personal with a performer who shared something personal with us.

"Later, a local teacher told me that it was the first time that he ever heard anyone talking about being gay in Marysville – not that those conversations don't occur in private or with good friends; but, they don't happen in public. This was a first.

"I know of one person in the audience who talked to Matt after the concert, and told him that because of what he said in between the songs, he had the confidence to come out to his parents.

"I also had a mother of a student who participated in Matt's 6th, 7th, and 8th grade choral clinic, who told me that her son had a lot of questions about Matt's sexuality. This mother feels that her son is wondering about who he is, and felt that, even though Matt didn't talk about being gay with the kids, he opened the door for her son to have a conversation about being gay.

"And, personally, I feel that's a fine example of the power of the arts. The arts can push the envelope. Additionally, the arts gives us platforms on which we can talk about issues. It's easier to talk about being gay when you can reference a musician ... or a character in a play ... or the theme of a painting ... Because...it gives you a really safe place to start. The discussion might not start with being about you...but that's where it might end up.

"We've had no backlash from anyone about the concert..."

DeGeneres To Keynote Convention

PFLAG National is excited to announce that Betty DeGeneres will be the keynote speaker at the 2011 PFLAG National Convention.

Betty is a role model as the proud parent of a lesbian daughter (you may have heard of her daughter, Ellen). Whether it is writing about her experiences (*Love, Ellen: A Mother/Daughter Journey*) or speaking out on behalf of LGBT people and their parents and families (as in Denver recent-



ly, at an event co-sponsored by the Matthew Shepard Foundation and Facing History and Ourselves), Betty personifies what it means to be a PFLAG parent. She is funny, and an inspiration to all of us.

Don't miss the opportunity to hear Betty DeGeneres speak at the PFLAG National Convention in Washington, D.C. November 3-6.

To find out more about the convention and to register, go to www.pflag.org.

News & Notes

News of Families and Friends

Condolences to Yvonne Rosnik, whose mother Louise Winkertobler died on March 7 in Switzerland at age 96; many will recall meeting Louise over the years when she came to Colorado to visit her daughter and family.

Thanks to Tim Wilson, Jackie Hoffman, Sarah Lehan, and Ginger and Stan Plymesser, who ushered at the Denver Gay Men's Chorus concerts; to the **Imperial Court**, which donated over \$1,000 from their January show at Hamburger Mary's (see photo); and to the parents of newly-out teens who spoke so movingly at the May meeting.

Sympathy to Bobbi Furer, who fractured her left ankle, is in a boot, can't drive for 6 weeks, and because of it resigned from a job she had held for 10 years.



Sandy Wilbanks (center) and Joe Moore (right) accept check from Prince Royale Alex Alba at Coronation on April 23.

Letter from Tom Carllon, Lakewood

I encourage all PFLAGers to join together to repeal Amendment 43. During the last four years, my husband and I have been advocating repeal of Colorado's discriminatory one-man-one-woman marriage requirement. As a gay, married couple, we testified for full marriage equality during the Senate

hearing. Some leaders continue to advocate partisanship as a way to get back at the enemy. While the civil union loss is hard to take for some, advocating for marriage and the wedding cake will be much sweeter in the end.

Write a letter today to the Denver Post and email to OpenForum@DenverPost.com.

Congratulations to Brenna Baker, Juliet Letteney, and Karen Rojas, the high school seniors who won our first scholarships.

Welcome to Ron Sandford, who attended the new volunteer orientation in April and is volunteering each week in the office.

Appreciation and good wishes to Rev. Toni Cook of St. Paul's United Methodist Church, 1600 Ogden, who is retiring. Her last Sunday preaching will be June 5, at the 10:30 a.m. service. A retirement party will take place after the service. In 2002 Rev. Cook was awarded a Colorado Community Service Award from PFLAG Denver for her devotion to the GLBT community.

KEEPING UP WITH CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Support – Education – Advocacy

SPEAKERS' BUREAU – We had three engagements in April:

1 – On April 18, Judy Trompeter spoke to a class of 20 students at the Scott Carpenter Middle School, about career in non-profits like PFLAG.

2 – On April 25, Shari Wilkins and John Ferguson spoke to Marshall Smith's "Sex and Society" class of 25 students at CU Boulder, about life experiences and recent political developments affecting our LGBT community.

3 – On April 27, Olive Hinnant and Kathleen Ceen participated in a discussion at Denver University of the film *Prayers for Bobby*. This was an event in the More Light: Sharing Stories on Sexuality and

Spirituality series there. The event was unfortunately poorly attended.

HELPLINE – David Biddle, Helpline Coordinator, responded to 8 calls in April, from: GLBTQ individuals (3); parents/families (2); schools (1); and solicitors (2).

SUPPORT GROUPS, MAY 5 – Twenty people came to the new families group, with Jody Applegate and Clare Kennelley facilitating. Nine persons plus facilitators Sara Winter and John Ferguson participated in the open-to-all group.

MAY MONTHLY MEETING – There were 74 in attendance.

Anti Bullying Campaign Launched by ABA – Marcia May forwarded this notice from *The Advocate*: Piggybacking on the success of campaigns like Dan Savage's "It Gets Better" and GLSEN's high-school outreach public service announcements, the American Bar Association has launched its own anti-bullying initiative, "The Kids Are Listening." This is a call to action for lawyers, judges, educators, and all community members to help assure LGBTQ youth receive positive messages and get the support that they need. Look for details at www.abanow.org.

Performances

The Laramie Project will be presented at Jeffco Open School, 7655 W. 10th Ave in Lakewood, on May 26, 27, and 28 at 7 p.m., with a matinee at 2 p.m. on the 28th. Following the play, the cast will perform their original monologues and host an audience Q&A talk back.

Out of the Closet and Into the Alley will be performing its first scripted production entitled *QUEERTOPIA*. It was written by Paula Gilovich with the About Face Youth Theatre Ensemble in Chicago, in memory of Lawrence King, a 15-year-old student from Oxnard, CA, who was shot to death inside his junior high school computer lab by a fellow student (continued next page)

News & Notes, cont.

for being gay. Performances will be at The Crossroads Theatre in the Five Points District on June 3 and 4 at 7:30 p.m. More information: Rainbow Alley Director Cory Barrett, 303-951-5212 or cbarrett@glbtcolorado.org.

Community Shares' 25th Anniversary Summer Celebration – For 25 years, and through an average donation of \$1/day, Community Shares of Colorado has inspired community-based philanthropy, and supported more than 100 member nonprofit organizations (including PFLAG Denver). Their celebration – featuring Dottie Lamm, former First Lady of Colorado, and Gloria Neal of CBS 4 Denver – will take place on Wednesday, June 8, at Infinity Park and Events Center, 4400 E. Kentucky Ave. Registration, reception, and silent auction begin at 5:30 p.m., and dinner and the program at 7. Tickets at \$50 are available at www.cshares.org/events.



New Books – The “gay-brain” scientist, Simon LeVay, has a new book out entitled *Gay, Straight, and the Reason Why: The Science of Sexual Orientation*. It puts to rest the old “chosen lifestyle” theory of homosexuality which has done so much harm.

Donovan's Big Day, a new children's book by Lesléa Newman, author of *Heather Has Two Mommies*, has just been published by Tricycle Press. A celebration of same-sex marriage, the book is seen through the eyes of Donovan, who has an important job to do on the day his two moms wed.

Scholarships (cont. from p. 1) community, I not only support but stand up for people. For some kids, school is the most terrifying place to go, where they get bullied and discriminated against for who they are. Everyone needs that one person to be there for them.”

Deborah expressed her appreciation at the high level and quality of interest in the scholarship program's first year. “We received some excellent submissions from students with impressive achievements and compelling stories.” Evaluation was based upon demonstrated leadership, scholastic achievement, extracurricular activities, and involvement in the LGBTQ community.

The mission of the scholarship program is to recognize, assist, and encourage outstanding LGBTQ high school seniors and their straight allies who demonstrate

outstanding, direct support to the LGBTQ community and advocate equality for all. The chapter hopes that by rewarding outstanding LGBTQ students and straight allies, they will be encouraged to continue post-secondary education, and to promote a positive image of LGBTQ youth. For the upcoming 2011-12 academic year, the Board approved up to three \$1,000 scholarships to be awarded to exceptional Denver metro area high school students, with the expectation they will continue to create meaningful change on their campuses and in their communities.

The Board and Scholarship Committee wish to express their appreciation to the many folks who made donations to the scholarship program to date, and want to encourage others to send in donations, 100% of which will be used solely for future scholarships.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
Help at PFLAG Denver's PrideFest booth on June 19.
Call the office at 303-573-5861 to sign up.

BUSINESS MEMBERSHIPS

Supporting Partnerships –

Sandra Wilbanks, Ph.D., Psychotherapist
303-618-4449, sandrawilbanks@comcast.net

Deb-Ann Thomson, Ph.D., C.A.C.
Psychotherapist, 2755 S. Locust St. #207, Denver
303-758-6634

DLS Group, Inc., Deborah Stone
Cognitive psychologist and management consultant
303-333-4513, 303-810-4513,
Denver, CO and Washington, DC

Tim Wilson, Family Service Counselor
Fairmount Mortuary, Cemetery & Cremation Services
303-399-0692, twilson@fairmountcemetery.net
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303-922-9337, flexible_electric_inc@comcast.net

Mark H. Carson & Associates, CPAs
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303-449-3060, mark@bouldercpas.com

Bill Coleman Entertainment
www.bubbletower.com, stretch@stiltwalker.com
303-922-4655

Basic Partnerships –

Denver Psychotherapy Care
Tony Miles, Ph.D.
720-205-9752, tmilesphd@aol.com
www.denverpsychotherapycare.com

S. Stanley Gordon's True Love Story
My Two Wives and Three Husbands
\$16.95 at Amazon.com and all booksellers

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